

Proposal Criteria

July 2002

Farmland Protection Program in Missouri

Background

The Farmland Protection Program (FPP) is a voluntary program that helps landowners keep their land in agriculture, and protects historic sites on agricultural lands. The program provides matching funds to organizations with existing farmland protection, or other conservation easement programs, to purchase conservation easements on land. To participate, a landowner develops a Conservation Easement agreement with a Land Trust or other entity. The entity then submits a proposal to the NRCS state conservationist through a local USDA Service Center.

This document provides details on Missouri's proposal requirements for FPP applicants.

Qualified Entities

These may include any state, tribal, and local governments, and non-governmental organizations such as land trusts, that have a Conservation Easement program. To document its qualifications, a land trust should include in the proposal:

- Documentation of non-profit status. IRS 501(c)3 status is sufficient.
- Information that demonstrates the capability to acquire, hold, manage, and enforce Conservation Easements. This should include:
 - Title appraisal policies or standards;
 - Ranking or selection criteria used to evaluate land for potential conservation easements;
 - Staff capacity and a management plan for easement stewardship;

- An example of the land trust's conservation easement deed;
- Sufficient funds for easement acquisition, monitoring and possible enforcement. This should include the availability of funding to cover the costs of acquisition of the parcel in question. A treasurer's report or monthly bank statement is sufficient.

Although not required, information about the land trust's history and experience with conservation easements will be helpful. For example, how many conservation easements are currently being managed? How long has the land trust held conservation easements?

Land Eligibility

For a particular parcel of land to qualify for FPP, the following documentation is required:

- A pending agreement between the land trust and the landowner to acquire a conservation easement on the property. This should include the landowner's signature, or include other signed documentation of the landowner's willingness to participate;
- A map of the parcel, showing ***either*** areas of "prime" or "statewide important" soils, ***or*** the location of historic sites;
- The percentage of the parcel that is "prime" or "statewide important" soils, ***or***
- Documentation that the historic site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or deemed eligible for listing. For eligibility, a letter from the State Historical Preservation Officer (Mike Chalfant, 573-522-8453) is sufficient;

- The size of the parcel, in acres;
- The landowner's name and contact address;
- The parcel address and location map;
- A map showing the adjacent parcels. For each adjacent parcel, indicate if it is in agricultural use, or urban use, *and* if it is protected as a park or with a conservation easement;
- The cost of the easement, as determined by the appraised fair market value of the parcel, and the appraised value of the parcel as agricultural land. Appraisal documentation should be included. Appraisals may be completed by a state certified appraiser, or by USDA's Rural Development (RD) personnel. Appraisals completed by private appraisers should include a disclosure statement;
- The requested cost-share for USDA (not to exceed 50 percent of the total easement cost);
- IRS Form 8283, if the landowner is donating part of the value of the conservation easement;
- An NRCS conservation plan, or documentation that one will be completed;
- The ranking score or other indication of how the parcel qualified according to the land trust's land evaluation policies;
- Names of any other partners in the funding or management of the conservation easement;
- Documentation that the parcel is part of an agricultural operation;
- Indication if the parcel is a Missouri Century Farm (note: Century Farm status is helpful but not required);
- Indication of other community values served by the proposed easement. These may include educational value as an outdoor classroom or demonstration farm, part of an environmentally sensitive watershed or ecosystem, designation as agricultural or greenway in a community or regional master plan, use for land application of municipal or feedlot waste, critical wildlife habitat, etc.

Note: a response to the last bullet item is helpful but not required.

How to submit a proposal

For best results, a proposal should be developed by working closely with NRCS personnel. Suggested contacts are:

Kansas City area: Raymond Goodwin; 816-474-4240; rgoodwin@marc.org

St. Louis/St. Charles area: Renee Cook; 636-922-2833 ext. 3; renee.cook@mo.usda.gov

Springfield area: DeDe Vest; 417-581-2719 ext. 3; dede.vest@mo.usda.gov

Columbia area: Frank Gordon; 573-446-9091 ext. 3; frank.gordon@mo.usda.gov

Other areas: contact the local USDA Service Center.

For more information

Contact any of the above NRCS employees, or Fred Young (in Columbia, 573-876-9427; fred.young@mo.usda.gov).

Web sites:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>

<http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/programs.html>



Visit USDA on the Web at:
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

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